

From: Alison McFarland
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/21/02 1:45pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I would like to comment on the Microsoft case. I am familiar with several operating systems, including Windows, and use Microsoft software routinely. Although the company makes good products, I am against this settlement. It is a Trojan horse: of course our impoverished schools need computers, and Microsoft is savvy enough to use that inarguable point as a means of further expanding their monopolistic practices. Although Microsoft ostensibly offers a choice of platforms to the schools, few administrators would choose anything other than the dominant Wintel system--dominant precisely because it is a monopoly--over the other platforms. The amount of money it would cost Microsoft to supply the schools is not only relatively painless for them, it is a sound investment in continuing monopoly. Meanwhile, Microsoft is waging an aggressive and effective campaign of public opinion against the anti-trust laws that are trying to contain it.

Whether one admires the products and the success of this company, it must be curtailed in a meaningful way in order to maintain the amount of competition the market offers. I do not wish to see a future in which our only choice for information technology is a single monopoly. I urge you to find a harsher settlement that serves as a deterrent to their practices.

Alison Sanders McFarland
Assistant professor
Louisiana State University